

# Cuba Then Halts Trips For Night

Delays Caused  
By Havana Check  
Of Ransom Goods

MIAMI, Fla., Dec. 23  
Freed prisoners of the Cu  
ban invasion streamed into  
Florida tonight for a joy  
ous reunion with their  
loved ones, but by mid  
night Operation Ransom  
appeared to have ground  
to a halt.

Officials were frankly pu  
zled at the cutoff of the pr  
isoner flow after four freedom  
flights had deposited more  
than 400 men on Florida soil.  
At least three planes refueled  
immediately and took off for  
Cuba and another load from  
the total of 1,113 Bay of Pigs  
invasion prisoners held in  
Castro jails.

Pan American World Air

Fidel Castro, in jovial  
mood, greets ransom ship  
in Havana and declares  
24-hour "state of peace"  
with U. S. Page A4.

Defense of Soviet spy  
Rudolph Abel placed at  
torney James B. Donovan  
in U. S. spotlight first  
time. Page A6.

"We are all drinking  
French champagne," a  
prisoner's mother in Ha  
vana tells a reporter.  
Page A6.

ays officials, supplying the  
planes, had planned to con  
tinue the operation until all  
were brought to Miami to  
night.

But unconfirmed reports ities had taken precautions to side to shake hands with  
from Havana indicated that limit the crowd strictly at the embrace a friend.  
Premier Fidel Castro would de  
lay a resumption of the airlift  
until morning. Latest esti  
mates were that the rescue op  
eration would not be complet  
ed until noon or possibly later  
on Monday.

Earlier today, after an ag  
onizing 9-hour delay in the  
timetable, four freedom flight  
DC6s landed in Florida with  
three hours, bringing 426 pris  
oners to tensely emotional re  
unions with families they had  
not seen for 20 months.

The delay was caused by  
Castro's insistence that the  
African Pilot, the ship carry  
ing part of the \$53 million in  
medicines and food for the ex  
change, arrive in Havana first.  
Once it arrived, about 2  
p. m., items on board had to  
be checked. This added to the  
delay.

The first flight landed in  
Florida at 6:05 p. m., with 108  
former captives of Castro's re  
gime. The second landed at  
7 p. m., with 106; the third at  
7:28 with 108 and the fourth  
at 8:55 with 104.

Hundreds more waited at  
San Antonio de los Baños mili  
tary airport, 25 miles south  
west of Havana, for their turn  
in the exchange worked out  
by New York lawyer James  
B. Donovan.

The brilliant winter sun was  
settling as the doors of the  
first big DC6 opened at the  
Florida base and the prisoners  
walked slowly down the ramp,  
each waving his hand at the  
small group on hand to greet  
them.

More than 200 newspaper  
and television people were at  
the base, along with a scatter  
ing of others, including lead  
ers of the Cuban Families  
Committee whose long efforts  
to free the men finally were  
crowned with success. Author

They were choked with emo  
tion as father met son, com  
rade embraced comrade and  
men in their 50s wrapped  
their arms around boys in  
their teens.

"Viva los Estados Unidos!  
Viva Kennedy!" one shouted.  
"We are not here because of  
what we did," yelled another.  
"We are here thanks to the  
people of the United States."

One of the released prisoners  
made a "V" for victory in the  
World War II gesture made  
famous by Winston Churchill.  
"Thank your President Ken  
nedy," he called. "Long live  
free Cuba."

As the last bus pulled away  
with the balance of the first  
plane load of prisoners, one  
reporter asked Cuban exile  
leader Jose Miro Cardona,  
"Was your son among them?"

Miro's voice was a throaty  
whisper.

"What do you mean?" he  
asked proudly. "They are all  
my sons."

As he said it, the first pas  
senger plane was wheeling out  
on the field to take off for  
Cuba again to bring out an  
other load of prisoners.

Despite the sometimes tatter  
ed appearance of the ar  
rivals, friends and officials  
said that on the whole the  
men "looked much better at  
first sight than we had antici  
pated."

When the first plane land  
ed, some of the officials  
charged through the rope bar  
ricade to embrace the released  
men. But the remainder of  
those on the scene contained  
themselves and the prisoners  
had no difficulty reaching the  
buses. Occasionally one would  
break loose from the escort

Slowly, then faster, they  
came down the ramp—the men  
who had known the heart  
break of defeat of their liber  
ation mission in Cuba 20  
months ago, who had lived  
through bitter humiliations  
heaped on them by their cap  
tivity, who had known the de  
spair of 30-year prison sen  
tences and the hopeless mis  
ery of life in a prison crowded  
with political captives.

It was a scene laden with  
emotion. Some of the liberated  
men charged impatiently down  
the ramp, two steps at a time,  
and onto the floodlit strip,  
laughing for sheer joy.

A mustached young man  
pushed away the arm pro  
ffered by a Red Cross girl,  
and grinning broadly, fairly  
skipped through the roped off  
lane from the plane and into  
a bus waiting to take the ar  
rivals to the processing center.

Some stopped to shake hands  
with acquaintances, including  
their wounded companions  
who were exchanged on credit  
early in the year.

A long caravan of cars and  
motorcycles preceded the first  
bus as it pulled away with the  
original arrivals but the for  
mer prisoners, laughing and  
waving in the weird glow of  
lights piercing the darkness,  
looked clean shaven although  
underweight.

How do you feel?" an of  
ficial shouted.

"Bien, chico, bien!"  
In other words, Fine, buddy,  
fine.

The first group did not in  
clude three high-ranking lead  
ers of the ill-fated Brigade  
2506—Jose San Roman, Man  
uel Artime and Eneito Oliva  
—on each of whose heads Cas  
tro had personally placed a  
\$500,000 ransom demand. Also  
absent from the first contin  
gent were the sons of Miro  
and another exile chief, Man  
uel A. Varona.

One of the immigration host  
esses, Maria Louisa Bolivar  
of Puerto Rico, was the first to  
go into the plane.

Inside she gave a brief wel  
coming speech in Spanish and  
received loud applause from  
the prisoners.

She told them that she was  
welcoming them again into  
this country in the name of  
the people of the United  
States.

By the time the third plane  
landed, the first group sat  
down to their first hot meal  
in the United States—vege  
table soup, roast beef, mashed  
potatoes, gravy and buttered  
peas. It was served on gleam  
ing white tablecloths by host  
esses.

Among the fourth group was  
Orlando Cuervo Rubio, son of  
a former Cuban Secretary of  
Health on whose head Castro's  
military tribunal put a \$100,  
000 price tag for his freedom.

The third load contained  
two Roman Catholic priests  
identified as Father Lugo and  
Father de las Heras, who had  
jumped as paratrooper chap  
lains for the Brigade. The  
Cuban tribunal had sentenced  
each of them to 30 years in  
jail, but what was worse, for  
bade them from conducting a  
daily Mass, a forced denial of  
the oath they took as priests.

Each was wearing lay clothes  
like the other prisoners.

Three of the passengers on  
the fourth plane were ill, and  
were taken to nearby hos  
pitals. Two were stretcher  
cases; one had swollen feet  
and the other a paralyzed leg.

As swiftly as they could be  
taken to the receiving center  
for a hot bath and meal, the  
prisoners dressed in clean,  
fresh khakis that had been  
provided for them.

Their clothes seemed clean  
and, in most cases, quite new,"  
one official declared. "But  
they just seemed to want to  
get rid of anything from  
Cuba."

Christmas  
Served Noon

Arigo

Choice of Appetize  
Roast Maryland Tu

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